

Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 120978
ORIGIN EB-07

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CAB-02 L-03 CIAE-00 COME-00
DODE-00 DOTE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 EPG-02 FAA-00 SS-15
NSC-05 /054 R

DRAFTED BY EB/AN:JBMAGNOR:BA
APPROVED BY EB/AN:RABROWN
CAB:ALARGAY (INFO)
EUR/CAN:DBLAKEMORE
EUR/NE:JSHUMATE

-----260255Z 045386 /64

R 252058Z MAY 77
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY OTTAWA
AMEMBASSY LONDON

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 120978

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: EAIR

SUBJECT: CIVAIR: US-UK CIVAIR NEGOTIATIONS -
CANADIAN CONNECTION

REF: OTTAWA 4153 AND PREVIOUS

SUMMARY - GENERAL SITUATION INCLUDING PRESENT PATTERN OF
AIR SERVICES BETWEEN US AND TORONTO AND MONTREAL AIRPORTS
SUGGESTS THAT TORONTO IS PROBABLY EXCLUDED AS REAL POSSI-
BILITY AS POINT SERVING US-UK AIR TRANSPORT MARKET IN THE
EVENT DIRECT US-UK SERVICES ARE SUSPENDED. MONTREAL ON
OTHER HAND COULD HANDLE US-UK TRAFFIC WITH LITTLE OR NO
INCREASES IN AIRLINE SERVICES. PASSENGERS, HOWEVER, WOULD
EXPERIENCE GREAT INCONVENIENCE WHICH COULD BE ONLY PARTIALLY
ALLEVIATED BY INCREASING PERSONNEL AT US PRE-CLEARANCE
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PAGE 02 STATE 120978

FACILITIES. EMBASSY IS REQUESTED APPROACH CANADIANS IN
ACCORDANCE WITH PARA 3 BELOW. END SUMMARY

1. WE HAVE CHECKED WITH US CUSTOMS AND US IMMIGRATION AND
NATURALIZATION SERVICES WITH RESPECT TO SITUATIONS AT
TORONTO AND MONTREAL AND WITH US AIRLINES SERVING THOSE
CITIES. US-TORONTO SERVICES ARE OPERATING AT HIGH-LOAD

FACTORS AND THIS IS EXPECTED TO CONTINUE THROUGH THE SUMMER TRAFFIC SEASON. TO HANDLE US-UK TRAFFIC OVER AND

ABOVE NORMAL US-TORONTO TRAFFIC WOULD, THEREFORE, CALL FOR ADDITIONAL FLIGHTS DURING OFF-PEAK PERIODS (WHICH WOULD MEAN DELAYS UNLESS CANADA -UK FLIGHTS SIMILARLY OPERATE DURING SAME OFF-PEAK PERIODS) OR SURFACE TRANSPORTATION BETWEEN TORONTO AND BUFFALO. MOREOVER, SERIOUS DELAYS AT US PRE-CLEARANCE FACILITIES WOULD, OF COURSE, RESULT FROM INCREASES IN US-CANADA PASSENGERS UNLESS PRE-CLEARANCE STAFFS WERE AUGMENTED.

2. SITUATION IS SOMEWHAT DIFFERENT AT MONTREAL. AIR CANADA MONTREAL-US SERVICES ARE OPERATING AT 30-50 PERCENT LOAD FACTORS AND IT IS BELIEVED AIR CANADA AND US AIRLINES COULD HANDLE ADDITIONAL TRAFFIC WITHOUT SIGNIFICANT ADDITIONS TO PRESENT OR PROPOSED FLIGHT SCHEDULES. ON OTHER HAND, UNLESS PRESENT PATTERNS OF SERVICES TO TWO MONTREAL AIRPORTS ARE CHANGED, US-UK TRAFFIC TRANSITING MONTREAL WOULD HAVE TO MOVE FROM ONE TO THE OTHER AIRPORT, WHICH ARE SOME DISTANCE APART. AGAIN, WITHOUT ADDING TO US PRECLEARANCE STAFFS, THERE WILL BE DELAYS IN DIRECT PROPORTION TO THE NUMBER OF ADDITIONAL US-UK PASSENGERS. DELAYS WOULD BE COMPOUNDED FURTHER WITH RESPECT TO THE CUSTOMS INSPECTION SINCE CANADIAN CUSTOMS WOULD UNDOUBTEDLY GIVE ONLY MINIMAL INSPECTION TO PASSENGERS TRANSITING CANADA FOR US. US CUSTOMS INSPECTION WOULD HAVE TO BE EVEN MORE THOROUGH THAN IT ORDINARILY WOULD BE FOR NORMAL CANADA ORIGINATING PASSENGERS.

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PAGE 03 STATE 120978

3. ACTION REQUESTED: EMBASSY OTTAWA IS REQUESTED APPROACH CANADIAN AUTHORITIES TO MAKE FOLLOWING POINTS:

A. AS GOC AWARE, THERE IS SOME POSSIBILITY OF CESSATION OF DIRECT US-UK AIR SERVICES FOLLOWING JUNE 22. US BELIEVES THIS IS UNLIKELY AND WOULD BE OF SHORT DURATION IN ANY EVENT, BUT POSSIBILITY NEVERTHELESS EXISTS.

B. SHOULD CESSATION OCCUR, IT COULD HAVE A SIGNIFICANT IMPACT ON EXISTING CANADA-UK AND CANADA-US AIRLINE TRAFFIC PATTERNS. CESSATION COULD ALSO POSE PROBLEMS IN US-CANADA RELATIONS IF CANADIAN ACTIONS TO DEAL WITH IMPACT ON EXISTING AIR SERVICES ARE PERCEIVED IN THE US AS CANADIAN ACTIONS ASSISTING THE UK AT EXPENSE OF THE US ON WHAT IS PURELY A US-UK BILATERAL DISPUTE.

C. US WOULD APPRECIATE KNOWING WHETHER GOC OFFICIALS HAVE GIVEN ANY THOUGHT TO HOW CANADA WOULD DEAL WITH

CESSATION AND IF SO WHAT GOC CONTEMPLATES DOING. US IS
PREPARED TO CONSULT WITH GOC ON THIS ISSUE SHOULD THAT BE
CONSIDERED NECESSARY OR APPROPRIATE.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
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Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
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Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: JBMAGNOR:BA
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
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Office: ORIGIN EB
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 77 OTTAWA 4153
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 27-Dec-2004 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2367860
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: CIVAIR: US-UK CIVAIR NEGOTIATIONS - CANADIAN CONNECTION
TAGS: EAIR, US, UK, CA
To: OTTAWA LONDON
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/42b9bc89-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009